

Can frown lines affect our confidence and self-esteem?

A common prejudice is that aesthetic treatments are mostly about looks. However, studies show that the reasons for having aesthetic procedures are often connected to self-perception and self-esteem.

Our face and facial expressions communicate – without words – our health, age, and emotions.[1] *Expression lines, such as frown lines, can lead to miscues, that is, erroneous signaling about our state of being.*[1] *For some of us, it can potentially affect our self-esteem.*[1]

Frown lines might affect how we feel about ourselves

Whereas we would like to think that looks aren't important, our physical appearance has been shown to be linked to confidence and self-esteem as well as to psychological well-being.[1] Although few of us aspire to win a beauty contest, most of us want to look our best and in general, feel good about ourselves. Frown lines and other wrinkles might lead to us not looking or feeling the way we want to.

Expression lines communicate our emotions

Our face and facial expressions communicate many things, whether we want it or not. Expression lines will tell others if we are happy or displeased with something, such as when vertical frown lines appear between our eyebrows.

When our face is at rest, we also communicate many things about ourselves, such as our age and health. Clear skin makes us look healthy whereas a dull skin tone could make us look tired, unhealthy, or as if we haven't got enough fresh air and sleep.

Expression lines, such as frown lines, can become permanent

Our skin, lines, and wrinkles give many non-verbal cues about us. Many wrinkles are so-called dynamic wrinkles; they appear as we express our emotions, such as when we smile. With time and repeated muscle contractions, these expression lines can become permanent, giving rise to a discord between our true emotions and how others interpret us.[2] For example, permanent frown lines can make us look angry or annoyed, even when our face is at rest.

Frown lines are one of many age-related changes

Frown lines and other permanent lines are one of many changes that affect the face with age. Other changes can be sagging skin, loss of facial fat, and bone resorption. Studies have shown that these kinds of changes can substantially affect our mood, psychological well-being, and feelings about ourselves.[2]

Not surprisingly, many people turn to aesthetic treatments to reduce the appearance of frown lines and other expression lines and wrinkles.

Understanding the psychological impact of aesthetic treatments

Studies that investigate the effectiveness of aesthetic treatments often try to capture the psychological impact of the treatments for the patients. Not only do they measure the objective reduction of the area, such as frown lines, but also what patients feel after the treatment and whether the treatment affects their confidence and self-esteem.

As an example, patients might be asked to report on the following concepts to understand why they seek an aesthetic treatment:[2]

- Bothered by facial lines
- Looking older than they want to look
- Feeling unattractive

- Looking tired
- Looking stressed
- Looking angry

Treating expression lines, not least frown lines, isn’t about beauty

Permanent frown lines could erroneously communicate that we’re angry, worried, or irritated. Few of us want to look worried or angry when we’re not. Consequently, clinicians report that patients who seek treatments for frown lines don’t do it because of arbitrary beauty concerns, but because frown lines convey anger or disapproval.[1]

Do people feel better after treatment of expression lines?

A clinical study evaluating the effectiveness of a treatment for frown lines showed significant changes after the treatment in the patients’ psychological well-being. The investigated psychological changes included the following aspects:[3]

- I feel ok about myself
- I feel attractive
- I feel great about myself
- I like myself
- I am accepting of myself
- I am comfortable about myself
- I feel happy
- I feel confident

The study thus showed that aesthetic treatments for frown lines can indeed have a much more profound effect on us than just changing our physical appearance. Aesthetic treatments can in fact make us feel happier and more

comfortable about ourselves. When frown lines (and other expression lines) are reduced, we become more confident and have higher self-esteem.

How can you make sure your treatment will look natural?

Though the notion of feeling happier and more confident can be appealing, many people worry an aesthetic treatment will make them look “done” or that they will end up with a result they don’t desire. How can you make sure the treatment will look natural and the way you want? Learn more in this article.

Also worth noting: For optimal treatment results, not least for frown lines, precision is key. Always consult a qualified healthcare practitioner who uses precision products and techniques should you consider a treatment!

References

1. Finn CJ et al. Dermatol Surg 2003;29(5):450–455.
2. Dayan S et al. Aesthet Surg J Open Forum 2019 May 6;1(2)
3. Ascher B et al. Aesthet Surg J. 2020 Aug 14;40(9):1000-1008.

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